

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON - Please join the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and the Kennan Institute for an on-the-record briefing about current Russian government policies towards religion and anti-Semitism in Russia. USCIRF Vice Chair Felice D. Gaer will lead the discussion featuring three experts on religion in Russia: Paul Goble, Nickolai Butkevich, and Lawrence A. Uzzell.

“This briefing is especially timely as the Administration begins a review of its Russia policy in advance of the upcoming meeting between President Bush and President Putin on February 24,” said Commissioner Gaer. “This meeting between President Bush and Putin comes at a crucial time with the increasing authoritarian trends in Russia.”

WHO: Paul Goble will analyze the status of Islam in Russia. Goble, a Senior Research Associate of the EuroCollege at the University of Tartu in Estonia, has served in the Central Intelligence Agency, the U.S. Department of State, and in U.S. international broadcasting as a specialist on ethnic and religious minorities in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Nickolai Butkevich will discuss anti-Semitism and other forms of extremism in Russia.

Butkevich is Research and Advocacy Director at the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union and he has published widely on extremism in Russia.

Lawrence Uzzell will describe the situation of Russia's Christian communities. Uzzell is President of International Religious Freedom Watch, an independent research center that analyzes threats to freedom of conscience in totalitarian and authoritarian countries.

WHEN: Monday, February 7, 2:30-4:00 p.m.

WHERE: The Capitol

Room SC-4

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

Preeta D. Bansal ,
- Felice D. Gaer ,